

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 GENEVA 03705 01 OF 04 091545Z  
ACTION ACDA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SOE-02 AF-10 ARA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
EA-10 EUR-12 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 IO-13 L-03  
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CEQ-01 OES-07 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00  
INRE-00 DOEE-00 NRC-05 ACDE-00 /144 W  
-----034264 091618Z /50

O 091521Z MAR 78

FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6979

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 GENEVA 03705

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, CCD

SUBJECT: U.S. STATEMENT IN CCD ON REDUCED-BLAST ENHANCED-  
RADIATION WEAPON, MARCH 9, 1978

REF: GENEVA 1944 (NOTAL)

1. ON MARCH 9, THE SOVREP (LIKHATCHEV) MADE A STATEMENT  
IN CCD ATTACKING THE "NEUTRON BOMB" AND TABLED A DRAFT  
CONVENTION, ON BEHALF OF ALL WARSAW PACT MEMBERS, WHICH  
WOULD PROHIBIT "NUCLEAR NEUTRON WEAPONS." TEXT OF DRAFT  
CONVENTION IS IDENTICAL TO REFTEL.

2. USREP (FISHER) RESPONDED AS FOLLOWS:

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PAGE 02 GENEVA 03705 01 OF 04 091545Z

BEGIN TEXT: MR. CHAIRMAN: THE INTRODUCTION TODAY BY  
THE SOVIET DELEGATION OF A DRAFT TREATY OR CONVENTION DE-  
SIGNED TO OUTLAW THE REDUCED-BLAST ENHANCED-RADIATION  
WEAPON, WHICH THEY CALL THE NEUTRON BOMB, REQUIRES SOME  
PLAIN TALK ABOUT THE NATURE AND EFFECTS OF NUCLEAR  
WEAPONS AND THE MILITARY CONFRONTATION IN THE WORLD TODAY.

NOW, THIS PLAIN TALK WILL NOT BE PLEASANT TALK. WE ARE TALKING ABOUT WEAPONS, PARTICULARLY NUCLEAR WEAPONS, THAT ARE DESIGNED TO KILL AND DESTROY. WE LIVE WITH THE AWESOME REALIZATION THAT THE FACE OF WAR IS THE FACE OF DEATH; IN THE CASE OF NUCLEAR WAR, DEATH ON A MASSIVE SCALE, AND NO AMOUNT OF CIRCUMLOCUTION CAN HIDE THIS FACT. WHEN TALKING OF DEATHS AND CASUALTIES, BOTH MILITARY AND CIVILIAN, DESTRUCTION OF CITIES AND FARMLANDS, WE DO SO BECAUSE THIS IS THE ONLY REALISTIC WAY WE CAN DESCRIBE THE DANGER WITH WHICH WE ALL ARE FACED.

IT IS THE CONVICTION OF THE UNITED STATES THAT THE SOVIET UNION, BY ENGAGING IN A ONE-SIDED PROPAGANDA EXERCISE AGAINST WHAT THEY CALL THE NEUTRON BOMB, IS DIVERTING ATTENTION FROM SERIOUS ATTEMPTS TO DEVELOP ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS THAT WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO INTERNATIONAL SECURITY.

THE U.S. DELEGATION BELIEVES THIS TO BE THE CASE BECAUSE THIS PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN FOCUSES ON ONLY ONE ASPECT OF A DANGEROUS CONFRONTATION OF CONVENTIONAL FORCES AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEPLOYED BY BOTH SIDES IN EUROPE. THE SOVIET PROPOSAL DOES NOT DEAL WITH THE MAJOR ASPECTS OF THE DANGER CAUSED BY THIS CONFRONTATION.

THE SPECIFIC WEAPON WE ARE DISCUSSING SHOULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 GENEVA 03705 01 OF 04 091545Z

DESCRIBED ACCURATELY AS THE REDUCED-BLAST, ENHANCED-RADIATION WEAPON. I INTEND TO INDICATE WHY I BELIEVE THIS TO BE THE CASE, BUT BEFORE I DO, I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THIS WEAPON IS A BENIGN OR HARMLESS DEVICE. IT IS A NUCLEAR WEAPON AND, LIKE ALL NUCLEAR WEAPONS, IT IS DESIGNED TO KILL. THE UNITED STATES FERVENTLY HOPES, AS IT DOES WITH RESPECT TO ALL NUCLEAR WEAPONS, THAT IT WILL NEVER BE EMPLOYED.

THIS WEAPON DIFFERS SOMEWHAT IN ITS EFFECTS FROM OTHER NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND THESE DIFFERENCES MUST BE DISCUSSED CANDIDLY. ALL NUCLEAR WEAPONS PRODUCE BLAST, HEAT, RADIATION AND FALLOUT. SO DOES THE REDUCED-BLAST, ENHANCED-RADIATION WEAPON, BUT IN COMPARISON TO CURRENT EXISTING TACTICAL NUCLEAR WARHEADS, IT EMITS A GREATER PROPORTION OF ITS TOTAL ENERGY AS RADIATION, IN THE FORM OF NEUTRONS, RATHER THAN AS BLAST AND HEAT. I SHOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT NEITHER THE SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPONS, NOR THE CONCEPTS FOR THEIR APPLICATION, ARE NEW. THEY HAVE BEEN IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN OF DISCUSSION IN THE UNITED STATES FOR AT LEAST

FIFTEEN YEARS.

NOW, I WOULD LIKE TO ILLUSTRATE THE MILITARY IMPLICATIONS OF THESE TECHNICAL FACTS. HERE AGAIN, PLAIN TALK WILL NOT BE PLEASANT TALK.

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THIS COMMITTEE UNDERSTANDS THE IMPORTANCE OF ARMORED VEHICLES, PARTICULARLY TANKS, IN THE EUROPEAN THEATER. I AM SURE THIS COMMITTEE ALSO UNDERSTANDS THE THREE-TO-ONE TANK ADVANTAGE WHICH THE WARSAW PACT FORCES HAVE IN

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PAGE 01 GENEVA 03705 02 OF 04 091554Z  
ACTION ACDA-12

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FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6980

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

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AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 04 GENEVA 03705

CENTRAL EUROPE, AN ADVANTAGE WHICH EXISTS WITHOUT EVEN TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE VERY LARGE NUMBER OF TANKS THAT COULD BE BROUGHT FROM THE SOVIET UNION ON SHORT NOTICE. IT IS NATURAL THAT NATO SHOULD CONSIDER DEFENSES AGAINST THESE FORCES. IN THIS CONSIDERATION, IT HAS BECOME EVIDENT THAT TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS OFFER ONE OF THE POSSIBLE WAYS TO HALT A MASSIVE TANK ATTACK. TANKS AND THEIR CREWS ARE MORE VULNERABLE TO NEUTRON RADIATION THAN TO BLAST AND HEAT. HOWEVER, THE USE OF TACTICAL

NUCLEAR WEAPONS CURRENTLY IN THE NATO INVENTORY IN AN ANTI-ARMOR ROLE MIGHT INVOLVE SUBSTANTIAL COLLATERAL DAMAGE FROM BLAST AND HEAT OUTSIDE OF THE TARGET AREA. THIS AREA OF COLLATERAL DAMAGE WOULD BE MUCH LESS IN THE CASE OF AN ENHANCED RADIATION/REDUCED BLAST WEAPON  
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PAGE 02 GENEVA 03705 02 OF 04 091554Z

BECAUSE THE PROPORTION OF ENERGY RELEASED AS BLAST AND HEAT IS SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED WHILE THE PROPORTION OF ENERGY RELEASED AS NEUTRON RADIATION IS INCREASED.

LET ME GIVE A PRECISE EXAMPLE; AND HERE, AGAIN, PLAIN TALK WILL NOT BE PLEASANT TALK BECAUSE WE ARE TALKING OF DEATH.

A HYPOTHETICAL ONE-KILOTON REDUCED-BLAST, ENHANCED-RADIATION WEAPON WOULD PRODUCE ROUGHLY THE SAME PROMPT RADIATION, AND HAVE ROUGHLY THE SAME ANTI-TANK CAPABILITY AS A TEN-KILOTON STANDARD FISSION WARHEAD. NEUTRONS EFFECTIVELY PENETRATE THE TANK ARMOR AND WOULD BE LETHAL AGAINST SOLDIERS IN ENEMY TANKS AND, OF COURSE, AGAINST OTHER PERSONS OVER AN AREA WITH A RADIUS OF ABOUT ONE-KILOMETER. IN THE CASE OF THE REDUCED-BLAST WEAPON, THE LETHAL AREA OF COLLATERAL DAMAGE PRODUCED BY BLAST OR HEAT WOULD NOT BE SUBSTANTIALLY GREATER THAN ONE-KILOMETER IN RADIUS. IN THE CASE OF A STANDARD TEN-KILOTON WEAPON, HOWEVER, THIS AREA OF LETHAL DAMAGE WOULD BE TEN TIMES GREATER. A ONE-KILOTON REDUCED-BLAST ENHANCED-RADIATION WEAPON WOULD HAVE THE SAME ANTI-TANK CAPABILITY AS A TEN-KILOTON FISSION WARHEAD BUT WOULD REDUCE, BY 90 PERCENT, THE DAMAGE TO NEARBY CIVILIANS AND URBAN AND RURAL AREAS. THE RISK FROM FALLOUT WOULD ALSO BE SIMILARLY REDUCED.  
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MR. CHAIRMAN, WE HAVE HEARD FROM OUR SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COLLEAGUES THAT THIS WEAPON IS "INHUMAN" AND "BARBARIC." I WOULD ACCEPT THESE TERMS, BUT I WOULD APPLY THEM TO ALL WEAPONS DESIGNED TO EXTINGUISH HUMAN LIFE, PARTICULARLY NUCLEAR WEAPONS, AND IF IT WERE TO TURN  
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PAGE 03 GENEVA 03705 02 OF 04 091554Z

OUT THAT WE WERE UNABLE TO CONDUCT THE BUSINESS OF THIS WORLD WITHOUT RESORTING TO THESE HORRIBLE NUCLEAR WEAPONS, WOULD NOT WE, RATHER THAN THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS WE EMPLOYED, BE BARBARIC?

IT CANNOT BE DENIED, MR. CHAIRMAN, THAT THE REDUCED-BLAST, ENHANCED-RADIATION WEAPON WOULD KILL IN HORRIBLE WAYS AND CARRY THE RISK OF GENETIC DAMAGE FOR THOSE WHO SURVIVED EXPOSURE. BUT SO WOULD ALL NUCLEAR WEAPONS, SOME OF THEM FAR MORE MASSIVE AND INDISCRIMINATE THAN THE REDUCED-BLAST, ENHANCED-RADIATION WEAPON. WE HAVE HEARD OUR DISTINGUISHED COLLEAGUE, THE SOVIET REPRESENTATIVE, AND SOME OTHER REPRESENTATIVES SPEAK OF THE INHUMANITY AND BARBARITY OF THE "NEUTRON BOMB." BUT I FEAR THAT WE WOULD WAIT IN VAIN TO HEAR THEM SPEAK OF THE INHUMANITY AND BARBARITY OF THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN THE SOVIET ARSENAL, SOME OF WHICH ARE AS MUCH AS 20,000 TIMES -- I REPEAT 20,000 TIMES -- MORE POWERFUL.

IN SOME OF THE STATEMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE CONCERNING THE REDUCED-BLAST, ENHANCED-RADIATION WEAPON THE ARGUMENT HAS BEEN ADVANCED THAT SOMEHOW ITS DEPLOYMENT WOULD MAKE IT EASIER TO CROSS THE THRESHOLD INTO NUCLEAR WAR. THE UNITED STATES REJECTS THIS ARGUMENT CATEGORICALLY.

WHILE THE REDUCED-BLAST, ENHANCED-RADIATION WEAPON IS A MORE DISCRIMINATING NUCLEAR WEAPON, IT IS STILL A NUCLEAR WEAPON. THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES HAS MADE CLEAR THAT THE DECISION TO USE THE REDUCED-BLAST, ENHANCED-RADIATION WEAPON TO DEFEND U.S. FORCES OR TERRITORY, OR TO DEFEND THE FORCES OR TERRITORY OF OUR ALLIES WOULD BE NO EASIER TO MAKE THAN THE DECISION TO USE ANY OTHER NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

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PAGE 01 GENEVA 03705 03 OF 04 091603Z  
ACTION ACDA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SOE-02 AF-10 ARA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
EA-10 EUR-12 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 IO-13 L-03  
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FM USMISSION GENEVA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6981  
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 04 GENEVA 03705

THAT DECISION WOULD REMAIN THE MOST AGONIZING ONE A POLIT-  
ICAL LEADER COULD FACE. THE POSSIBILITY OF INDISCRIMIN-  
ATELY DESTRUCTIVE RESPONSES FROM THE OTHER SIDE WOULD  
REMAIN HIGH, AS WOULD THE POTENTIAL FOR NUCLEAR ESCALA-  
TION.

AS, I AM SURE, THE DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES IN THIS  
COMMITTEE ARE AWARE, DECISIONS ABOUT THE PRODUCTION AND  
DEPLOYMENT OF THE REDUCED-BLAST, ENHANCED-RADIATION WEAP-  
ON HAVE NOT YET BEEN MADE. FULL AND DELIBERATE CONSUL-  
TATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ITS NATO  
ALLIES ARE NOW GOING ON ABOUT POSSIBLE DEPLOYMENT OF THAT  
WEAPON. I HAVE INDICATED SOME OF THE CONSIDERATIONS THAT  
ARE BEING TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THESE CONSULTATIONS. THE  
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PAGE 02 GENEVA 03705 03 OF 04 091603Z

UNITED STATES, HOWEVER, IS NOT PREPARED TO PREJUDGE THIS  
ISSUE ON THE BASIS OF THE ONE-SIDED PROPAGANDISTIC ARGU-  
MENTS PRESENTED IN SUPPORT OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL.

THE SOVIET DRAFT CONVENTION IS A RATHER CURIOUS  
PROPOSITION. IT PROPOSES PROHIBITION OF A SINGLE TYPE  
OF NUCLEAR WEAPON WHICH MAY BE DEPLOYED IN THE EUROPEAN  
THEATER WHILE IGNORING THE MANY OTHER THEATER NUCLEAR  
WEAPONS ALREADY DEPLOYED THERE OR NOW BEING DEPLOYED.  
THE STATEMENTS ABOUT THE NEUTRON BOMB MADE BY OUR  
DISTINGUISHED COLLEAGUES, THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
SOVIET UNION, BULGARIA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, THE GERMAN  
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC, HUNGARY, MONGOLIA AND POLAND, NOT  
SURPRISINGLY, HAVE SAID NOTHING ABOUT THE SS-20, A NEW,  
MOBILE, MULTI-WARHEAD THEATER MISSILE WHICH IS CAPABLE OF  
STRIKING ANY TARGET IN EUROPE WITH GREAT ACURACY AND  
ENORMOUS DESTRUCTIVE POWER, AND WHICH IS NOW BEING DEPLOY-  
ED IN LARGE NUMBERS IN THE SOVIET UNION. AGAIN, NOT  
SURPRISINGLY, THE SOVIET PROPOSAL HAS NOTHING TO SAY ABOUT  
ANOTHER NEW WEAPONS SYSTEM OF DEVASTATING CAPABILITY NOW  
BEING DEPLOYED IN THE EUROPEAN THEATER: THE POWERFUL,  
NUCLEAR-CAPABLE SUPERSONIC BACKFIRE BOMBER.

I AM AWARE THAT WHAT IS BEHIND THE CONCERN OF MANY

PEOPLE ABOUT THE REDUCED-BLAST, ENHANCED-RADIATION WEAPON IS A MORE GENERAL CONCERN THAT WE ARE PILING UP WEAPONS SYSTEM AFTER WEAPONS SYSTEM IN THE MAD MOMENTUM OF THE ARMS RACE WHEN OUR EFFORTS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO RIDDING THE WORLD OF WEAPONS SYSTEMS. I UNDERSTAND THIS CONCERN BECAUSE IT IS A CONCERN THAT THE UNITED STATES SHARES.

COMMENTING TO THE PRESS IN WARSAW ON DECEMBER 30 ON MR. BREZHNEV'S PROPOSAL, PRESIDENT CARTER EXPRESSED HIS  
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PAGE 03 GENEVA 03705 03 OF 04 091603Z

HOPE THAT "AS A RESULT OF THE SALT II TALKS, WE MIGHT AGREE WITH THE SOVIETS TO START ADDRESSING THE QUESTION OF THE SO-CALLED TACTICAL (OR THEATER) NUCLEAR WEAPONS, OF WHICH THE ENHANCED-RADIATION OR NEUTRON BOMB WOULD BE ONE." ANOTHER, HE WENT ON TO SAY, WOULD BE THE SS-20, WHICH IS MUCH MORE DESTRUCTIVE THAN ANY WEAPON POSSESSED BY THE WESTERN EUROPEAN MEMBERS OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE -- A WEAPON MUCH MORE DESTABILIZING, HE NOTED, THAN THE SO-CALLED NEUTRON BOMB. SUMMARIZING THE PROBLEM, PRESIDENT CARTER STATED, "THERE ARE NOW SEVERAL THOUSAND TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS ALREADY DEPLOYED ON BOTH SIDES IN THE EUROPEAN THEATER, AND THE WHOLE MATTER MUST BE ADDRESSED IN ITS ENTIRETY RATHER THAN ONE WEAPON AT A TIME."

THE UNITED STATES IS COMMITTED TO SEEKING BALANCED ARRANGEMENTS AIMED AT REDUCING THE ARMS RACE, ESPECIALLY THE COMPETITION IN THE FIELD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THE UNITED STATES IS CONTINUING TO PRESS FORWARD TOWARD THE OBJECTIVE OF A COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST BAN. THE UNITED STATES IS MAKING STRENUOUS EFFORTS TO BRING THE CURRENT STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TALKS TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION. OVER THE LONGER TERM, THE UNITED STATES WILL SEEK RECIPROCAL REDUCTIONS IN THE NUMBER OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, WITH THE GOAL OF EVENTUALLY ELIMINATING ALL NUCLEAR WEAPONS FROM THE ARSENALS OF STATES.

THE UNITED STATES REAFFIRMS ITS BELIEF THAT THIS COMMITTEE HAS A MAJOR ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISARMAMENT MEASURES THAT WOULD TRULY CONTRIBUTE TO INTERNATIONAL SECURITY. THE UNITED STATES REJECTS ANY ATTEMPT TO CONVERT THE COMMITTEE INTO A PROPAGANDA FORUM AND THUS DIVERT IT FROM ITS IMPORTANT TASK. IN THE VIEW OF THE UNITED STATES, THE PROPOSAL INTRODUCED TODAY IS SUCH AN

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PAGE 01 GENEVA 03705 04 OF 04 091602Z  
ACTION ACDA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SOE-02 AF-10 ARA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
EA-10 EUR-12 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 IO-13 L-03  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 04 OF 04 GENEVA 03705

ATTEMPT.

THANK YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN. END TEXT

VANDEN HEUVEL

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** NUCLEAR BOMBS, TACTICAL WEAPONS  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 09 mar 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Errors:** N/A  
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**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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